

ESSAY WRITING

A An essay is a systematic exposition of a subject. It consists of a number of paragraphs designed and developed sequentially on the given subject. Arrangement of thoughts in well-connected paragraphs keeping in view the principles of unity and proportion is of utmost importance in an essay. An essay is a piece of art and, therefore, in its final form it should appear to have been written spontaneously.

An essay must interest its readers, and must have unity and coherence. This implies relevance, proportion and arrangement. An essay should be concise and the style should be lucid, direct and clear. It should carry the personal touch of the writer.

B Classification of essays

Essays may be classified as narrative essays, descriptive essays, expository essays, reflective essays and imaginative essays. These kinds are, however, not mutually exclusive. For example, a descriptive essay may contain a good deal of narration, and almost all essays, whatever be the kind, have to be more or less reflective in nature.

C Descriptive essays

A descriptive essay consists of a description of some place or thing. Here we express in words what the eye sees and the ear hears. We describe a scene, an object or a person we have met, e.g., animals, plants, towns, countries, buildings, incidents, and aspects and phenomena of nature.

D Narrative essays

A narrative essay consists mainly of the narration of some event or a series of events. Narrative essays cover historical stories or legends, biographies, incidents, accidents or disasters, journeys or voyages, stories, real or imaginary.

E Reflective essays

A reflection is exposition of one's thoughts on some subject. This type of essay is generally of an abstract nature. It covers habits, conventions, qualities (bravery, honesty, etc.), social, political, domestic, philosophical and religious topics.

In treating such themes you should try to reason and support your statements with facts and arguments.

F Imaginative essays

In this type of essays, the writer is supposed to place himself in an imaginary position and as such he is not conditioned by any physical or material factors. This type covers wishes — e.g., 'If I Were the Principal', or 'The Autobiography of a Desk'.

G Expository essays

An expository essay consists of an exposition or explanation of some subject, e.g.:

- (a) industries, institutions, occupations;
- (b) scientific topics (gravitation, space travel);
- (c) literary topics (Modern fiction, nature of Keats's poetry).

H Some practical hints on essay writing

1. The subject of your essay should be clearly defined in your mind.
2. All the points relating to the subject that arise in your mind should be noted on a piece of paper.
3. These points are classified and organised into groups under suitable headings; irrelevant points are rejected.
4. These selected points are organised in an outline, and the thoughts are arranged in a logical order.
5. The essay should consist of introduction (which should be arresting), body and conclusion. Remember, an essay should be a methodical treatment of a subject and not a jumble in which anything can be put anywhere.
6. The essay should be divided into paragraphs. Each paragraph should deal with one idea and should consist of sentences which are closely related to one another.
7. Write in a simple, concise, clear, direct and natural style.

I Some specimen essays

A Visit to a Hospital

On the 27th of May, my cousin came to our house and informed us that my aunt had got burnt when the stove on which she was cooking, burst accidentally. She had sustained about sixty per cent burns and was admitted to Safdarjung Hospital.

We decided to visit her the next evening. We reached the hospital around 4 p.m. My father went to the reception counter and inquired of the nurse on duty about my aunt's room and bed number. We were told that she was in the special ward No. 8, bed No. 5. In this ward only burn-injury cases were treated. On the door we were told to take off our shoes and were provided with masks so that we might not carry any infection inside the ward. The ward was very clean and contained special beds with high iron coverings. All the patients had thin white sheets on these coverings. This precaution was taken so that no cloth would touch their body. I really felt miserable to find my aunt in so much pain and agony. The doctors and nurses attending upon the patients were very caring and sympathetic. They were consoling them while administering the necessary treatment and medicines to them.

We could not stay in the ward for long and while coming out of the ward, I decided to

see the hospital. There was an Intensive Care Unit in the hospital where patients who needed looking after all day round were kept. The relatives of the patients moved about with anxiety and tension on their faces.

Then I turned to the Operation Theatre. The red light outside the door was on, which indicated that an operation was in progress. Outside the theatre, I saw people waiting impatiently, as someone close to them was being operated upon. The corridor presented a calm and quiet look except for the movement of the nurses and ward boys carrying patients on the stretchers.

Next I saw the Out-Patient Department. Here the patients were treated and sent home. The doctors and nurses attending to them were hearing patiently their problems and ailments. They were being given injections and medicines and were told to report on a future date.

While coming out, I found some people squatting in the lawns of the hospital. The entire hospital presented a very gloomy look. There was a vast difference between the atmosphere which prevailed inside and outside the hospital.

A Daring Bank Robbery

It was the 17th of June 2005 when my mother had to go to the bank because she had to encash one of her fixed deposits which had matured on that date. She decided to take me along as my school was closed for summer vacation.

It took us about half an hour to reach the bank. My mother instructed me to be seated on the sofa lying near the door and herself proceeded to the 'FIXED DEPOSIT' counter. People in the bank were busy depositing and withdrawing money. Suddenly a Maruti van came and stopped near the entrance of the bank. In a flick of a second, five masked youngmen with sophisticated weapons in their hands entered the bank. They overpowered the security guard and after taking positions warned the people of dire consequences if they tried to move. They told all the customers and the bank employees to stand up, raise their hands and turn their faces towards the wall. Filled with fear and terror everybody did as directed.

Two robbers then entered the Manager's office and demanded the keys to the strong room. Help from outside was impossible as all the telephone connections had been snapped. The robbers entered the strong room and instructed the cashier to open the cash box. They removed all the cash and filled it in the bag they were carrying. Even the "Payments" counter was not spared.

Then the robbers hurriedly left the bank, but before departing they warned us that if anyone tried to follow, they would kill him. After this they made good their escape. The whole operation took not more than ten minutes.

Everybody in the bank was stunned and was perspiring. The Bank Manager sounded the siren and within minutes the whole bank was crowded with police officials and public.

An Unwelcome Guest

Indians are known for their hospitality. They welcome their guests with open arms, for they feel that a guest is a person to be honoured and respected and to serve him is a sacred duty. But there are certain guests who are unwelcome and people really dread their visit.

Mr. S.M. Narayan, one of my father's friends, is a person whose visits we detest, as he disturbs our entire routine. He visits us frequently and comes without prior information. Whenever he comes from Bangalore, my mother has to take leave because he takes his own sweet time to get up in the morning and is very particular to have proper breakfast and lunch. Not only this, he is very fussy about the food we eat and keeps commenting that the food is not properly cooked.

My mother is very particular about keeping things in their proper place, but the moment Mr. Narayan arrives, our guest room as well as our drawing room is in a total mess. He is very unsystematic and throws about things here and there. He knows that there is no servant in the house, yet he expects my mother to wash and iron his clothes.

Mr. Narayan is very inconsiderate and wants everything his way. He refuses to bring his own things and very freely uses the shaving kit of my father. He misuses the telephone by making not only local calls but also S.T.D. calls. He feels as if the telephone bill has not got to be paid. Not only this, he invites his local guests and expects us to really look after them. He wants my father to provide him the car for his exclusive use. We are all forced to run errands for him. And yet he is never satisfied with our hospitality.

As long as Mr. Narayan is in the house, our whole routine remains upset and we all get tense. The moment father goes to drop him at the station, we all heave a sigh of relief.

An Incident I Can Never Forget

During the summer vacation, I decided to visit my uncle, who was posted at Srinagar. I booked a ticket on a flight from Delhi to Srinagar via Amritsar. On 26th May I boarded the airbus of the Indian Airlines at 9 a.m. I got a comfortable seat and soon the plane took off. I was enjoying the flight and did not even come to know when the plane had landed at Amritsar.

At Amritsar about six passengers boarded the plane. Minutes after the plane took off, we were served breakfast. We were all enjoying ourselves, when one of the passengers got up and took position. He had a hand grenade in his hand. Soon there was an announcement by the staff on board that the plane had been hijacked and that the passengers should not panic but remain calm. The two hijackers were terrorists from the Punjab and wanted to take the airbus to Lahore to seek political asylum there. The pilot tried to persuade them but it was all in vain. They were determined to have their way. All the passengers were in a fix, for nobody knew what fate had in store for them next.

Having no alternative, the airbus flew towards Lahore but at Lahore airport the Pakistani authorities refused permission for landing. We hovered over the airport for about ten minutes but our pilots could not convince the airport personnel. At this the hijackers ordered the plane to be taken back to Amritsar.

When we landed at Amritsar the police had cordoned off the area and the Director General of Police was trying to persuade the hijackers to surrender. He was putting psychological and emotional pressure on them to surrender. At times the situation became so tense and explosive that we all became desperate. This drama continued for three hours. Then suddenly the plane was overpowered by Black Cat Commandos. Within seconds both the hijackers were arrested and the passengers freed. Some of the passengers broke down and started crying. I just cannot express how I felt at that moment, but till today whenever I remember this incident, I feel a chill moving down my spine.

The Autobiography of a Shoe

One fine morning about three years ago, I was given finishing touches by the workmen in the Bata Shoe Company and was packed in a box ready to be transported to a Bata show room in Mumbai.

We were loaded in a truck by the workers and we soon left for our new destination. I enjoyed the lovely scenic beauty and I do not know when I fell asleep. When I woke up, I found that the truck was passing by the Gateway of India. After about two hours we reached the showroom. We were unloaded, and after dusting me, the salesman placed me in the window of the showroom. I was so attractive that within hours of my reaching Mumbai, I was sold to a rich Industrialist. From the showroom, I travelled to his house in a Mercedes. There was a world of difference between the journey in the bone-breaking truck and the luxurious Mercedes. I made friends in the palatial house of the Industrialist. I saw the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, when I went on business trips abroad with my master.

My days were passing comfortably and I considered myself to be one of the happiest shoes of the world, when one night someone quietly entered my master's bed room. It took me no time to recognise that the person was none but his nephew. He took out a revolver and aimed it at him. I frantically cried for help and wanted to wake him, but nobody could understand my language. A shot rang and there were blood-stains all over my face — the blood of my beloved master. The wicked nephew escaped under cover of darkness.

Next morning in the group of mourners I could spot the murderer but was helpless because of lack of communication. I was the mute eye witness to that gory crime.

Till today with blood stains on my face, I am lying on the shoe rack. I feel lonely since nobody visits this room after my master's death.

My Future Plan

My name is Munazzam. I have a lot of dreams. When I was a kid my dream was to be a pilot, and as the time went by, I developed other dreams, sometimes, I used to think of being a president, an army officer, a doctor and other interesting and on the other hand I used to think of being a pilot. But now I have grown up, now I know what I want to be. I've almost finished my studies in the university. I will obtain Bachelor of Science. After I graduate, I want to work in one of the biggest oil company such as Chevron, PETRONAS, Exxon, etc. I want to be the staff manager or manager at least. I prefer working offshore because it gives me challenge to work over there plus they will pay me higher than work in the office. All of this is just the beginning of my dreams. After I work for 4 to 5 years, I'll have a enough money by that time so I'll atleast be able to quit my job and start a business. I will buy a few shops and have another business such as futsal court or restaurant and anything that have a good prospect. By that way I will make more money as compared to what I earn working in the company. After I'll start with my business, I am going to marry a beautiful woman. I will start a family and would plan to have 2 children that would be a boy and a girl. I want to have a big house with a garden outside or maybe a pool so my children can play inside my the premises because, if my children play outside, it will be a little risky. I just don't want anything bad to happen to my family. And maybe if I have spare money, I want to take my family to Makkah for 'Umrah' or 'hajj'. I think that is all I can say about my dreams. It is just a simple dream for a simple man like me.

Exercise 1. Write a short essay of about 250-300 words on the following topics:

1. The Importance of Moral Education
2. A Visit to a Museum
3. An Embarrassing Situation I Faced
4. The Most Beautiful Place You Have Visited
5. My First Experience in the Kitchen
6. The Problem of Pollution
7. The Political Figure I Admire Most
8. A Hot Day Spent without Electricity
9. A Visit to an Amusement Park
10. A Journey by Air
11. The Autobiography of a Haunted House
12. An Indian Wedding
13. A Visit to a Hill Station
14. The Subject I Enjoy Studying Most
15. If I Were the Class Teacher of My Class
16. Life in the 21st Century
17. How Teachers' Day Was Celebrated in Your School
18. My Neighbours
19. A Few Things I Dislike
20. Your Participation in a Dramatic Performance